

Factory Farming

The Argument from Fred's Basement

- (1) It is wrong for Fred to torture the puppies in his basement.
- (2) If (1), then it is wrong to eat factory farmed meat.
- (3) So, it is wrong to eat factory farmed meat.

1st Difference: Fred tortures the animals himself. Most people eat meat that was tortured by others.

2nd Difference: Most people are unaware of the treatment of the animals they eat. So they are off the hook.

3rd Difference (Utilitarianism): If Fred didn't torture the puppies, they wouldn't suffer. But if I stopped buying and eating factory farmed meat, no animals would be spared lives of misery.

1st Reply: Imagine that cocamone production was a big business. It would still be wrong to ingest cocamone.

2nd Reply: There will be some number that companies set to decide how many chickens they are going to produce.

10,000 people give up eating chicken => 250,000 fewer chickens will be bred next year.

- Give up chicken: 1 in 10,000 chance that a bunch of chickens will be spared because of you.
- Don't give up chicken: 1 in 10,000 risk that 250,000 chickens will suffer because of you.

Small risk of great harms are morally wrong:

Parenting: failing to secure their children in car seats, leaving children unattended at home, drinking or smoking during pregnancy. But these things are morally wrong.

Aircraft Security: unlikely that oxygen masks, lifejackets, emergency exits will be needed. But it would be morally wrong not to take care of these things.

4th Difference (Double Effect): Fred intends the torture of animals as a means to getting the cocaine. I just foresee that animals will suffer. It is not something that I intend.

Reply: Double Effect requires not just that the evil effect is not intended. It also requires that the evil is outweighed by the good that is intended. The good of my enjoying a tasty dish of meat does not outweigh the horrible suffering of animals.

Experimenting on and Eating Humans and Animals

(A) It is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on animals.

(H) It is never OK to perform painful experiments on a human.

An Argument for (A)

- (1) A painful experiment on animals is the only way to test a vaccine or a drug that could save and improve many human lives.
- (2) If (1) is true, then it is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on animals.
- (3) So it is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on animals.

An Argument Against (H)

- (1) It is OK to perform painful experiments on animals because of the benefits that humans receive.
- (2) If (1) is true, then it is OK to perform painful experiments on humans because of the benefits that other humans would receive.
- (3) So it is OK to perform painful experiments on humans.

A Revised Argument Against (H)

- (1) It is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on animals because of the benefits that humans receive.
- (2) There are some humans whose lives are less than or equal to the value of some animals.
- (3) The only difference between humans and animals that could justify performing painful experiments on an animal but not on a human is a difference in value.
- (4) If (1) and (2) and (3) are true, then it is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on humans.
- (5) So it is sometimes OK to perform painful experiments on humans.

Motivation for (2): There are humans who do not do a few or even any of the things mentioned in the reply. Consider a baby or a severely mentally disabled person. If the value of a life is equal to its quality, the baby and the disabled person have lives with very little value. If we think about value in this way, then there are some animals that have more valuable lives than they do.

Motivation for (3): This was the reply that was given against the first argument against (H).

Reply: Deny (4). If we experimented on humans, then the costs would far outweigh the benefits. People would be distressed and outraged. Medical and research centers would come under attack. The doctor patient relationship would be damaged.

Reply to Reply: But suppose there were a culture that didn't care. Everyone followed the reasoning of the argument against (H) and found it persuasive. Everyone was OK with performing experiments on severely disabled people and on babies. Or suppose that in the future, people change their minds. Would it then be OK to experiment on humans? If not, then there is something else that is wrong with the revised argument ag